

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

HELPING DEFEAT THE IRAQI INSURGENCY BY SEALING IRAQ'S BORDERS

by

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This SRP is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

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U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

Report Documentation Page			Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188		
Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.					
1. REPORT DATE 30 MAR 2007		2. REPORT TYPE Strategy Research Project		3. DATES COVERED 00-00-2006 to 00-00-2007	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Helping Defeat the Iraqi Insurgency by Sealing Iraq's Borders			5a. CONTRACT NUMBER		
			5b. GRANT NUMBER		
			5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER		
6. AUTHOR(S) Frank Skirlo			5d. PROJECT NUMBER		
			5e. TASK NUMBER		
			5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER		
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, PA, 17013-5050			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER		
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)			10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)		
			11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)		
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT See attached.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Same as Report (SAR)	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 23	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Lieutenant Colonel Frank E. Skirlo
TITLE: Helping Defeat the Iraqi Insurgency by Sealing Iraq's Borders
FORMAT: Strategy Research Project
DATE: 1 February 2007 **WORD COUNT:** 6,062 **PAGES:** 23
KEY TERMS: Security, Peacekeeping and Stability Operations, Counterinsurgency
CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

Since the defeat of Saddam Hussein's Army during Operation Iraqi Freedom, several factors are contributing to the growing insurgency within Iraq. One such factor is the existence of porous borders between Iraq and its neighboring nations, allowing insurgents and materiel to stream across Iraq's national borders, thereby creating political, military, and economic havoc within Iraq. Insurgents externally provided with additional arms, personnel, equipment, and financing can easily reverse any short- or long-term political, military, and economic gains achieved by Coalition forces in Iraq. In fact, Iraq will not stabilize until the Iraqi borders are effectively sealed. Once this is accomplished, the United States and Iraqi governments can apply all available elements of national power to ensure successful democratization and stabilization efforts within Iraq. The problem is determining how to secure the vast Iraqi border. This Strategy Research Project will begin with a historical review of the correlation between successful insurgencies and external support. It will then cover the characteristics and the associated problems with the present Iraqi borders. Finally, this paper will propose a barrier system to seal the Iraqi borders, based on available technologies, and provide recommendations on how and where to implement it.

HELPING DEFEAT THE IRAQI INSURGENCY BY SEALING IRAQ'S BORDERS

Since the defeat of Saddam Hussein's Army during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, several factors are contributing to the growing insurgency within Iraq. One such factor is the existence of porous borders between Iraq and its neighboring nations, allowing insurgents and materiel to stream across its national borders, thereby creating political, military, and economic havoc within Iraq. In fact, insurgents externally provided with additional arms, personnel, equipment, and financing can easily reverse any short- or long-term political, military, and economic gains achieved by Coalition forces. As one can infer from Jeffrey Record's article "External Assistance: Enabler of Insurgent Success," the Coalition cannot defeat the Iraqi insurgency until Iraq's national borders are effectively sealed.¹ Once this is accomplished, the United States and Iraqi governments can apply all available elements of national power to ensure efficient and effective democratization and stabilization efforts. The problem is determining how to secure the vast Iraqi border. This Strategy Research Project will begin with a historical review of the correlation between successful insurgencies and external support, as outlined in Record's article. It will then cover the characteristics and the associated problems with the present Iraqi borders. Finally, this paper will propose a barrier system to seal the Iraqi borders, based on available technologies, and provide recommendations on how and where to implement it.

As demonstrated throughout history, insurgencies are most likely to be successful when provided external help, especially when bordering nation states directly support the insurgency.² A recent RAND monograph on lessons from five decades of counterinsurgency research demonstrates this point:

Border security was the third element studied by RAND, as many insurgents rely on external support and cross-border sanctuaries. Sealing the borders could thus be very useful in COIN [Counterinsurgency], as the French discovered in Algeria. The Morice Line sealed both the Tunisian and Moroccan borders to insurgents. RAND analysts, after initial skepticism about border security, began to advocate it in Vietnam, as infiltration from the north became a bigger component of the war, though the system was never implemented.³

Several specific examples can demonstrate this point, as described in Record's article. Here, three examples where external support influenced the outcome of the insurgency will be discussed initially; two were successful and one was unsuccessful. These include the American Revolution, the American Civil War, and the Vietnam Conflict.⁴

Our first conflict, the American Revolution, is an example of a successful externally supported insurgency. France, the American colony's principle ally, provided immense amounts

of materiel for the colonists' war effort. This included 30,000 muskets, 300,000 pounds of gunpowder, and 25,000 uniforms, all of which were indispensable for fighting the 1777 campaigns. Additionally, Spanish and Dutch declarations of war against Great Britain preoccupied the British, opening the floodgates for massive French support to the colonists. This included financing, 90 percent of the gunpowder consumed by American forces, and direct French military intervention, all of which ultimately contributed to the defeat of the British.

Record also described the Confederate States of America's fight for secession from the Union during the American Civil War as an example of an unsuccessful insurgency due to the South's lack of external support. The Confederacy relied on Great Britain as its primary external supporter of the insurgency, depending heavily on British arms, ammunition, and materiel for the South's war effort.⁵ Blockade-runners provided the Confederacy with 60 percent of its rifled shoulder arms, one third of its lead for bullets, the ingredients for three-quarters of its gunpowder supply, nearly all the paper required for cartridges, and critically needed food supplies.⁶ Additionally, the North was industrially and materially stronger than the South, having an 8:1 advantage in draftable manpower, a 6:1 advantage in financial resources and industrial production, and a 4:1 advantage in railroad track mileage. Hence, the Confederacy needed to ensure it received substantial aid from well-established alliances with Great Britain, France, or another materially powerful nation if it was going to have any chance of winning the War. Unfortunately, the Confederacy lost these alliances when Lincoln issued his vastly popular Emancipation Proclamation, thereby swaying Britain's support to the Union. The effective Union blockade of the South's 3,549-mile coastline eventually left the Confederacy in an emaciated condition by the time Lee surrendered at Appomattox.

A third conflict, the Communist takeover of South Vietnam, is a second example of a successful externally supported insurgency. North Vietnam had no arms industry and had to import arms and ammunition from the Soviet Union, China, and other Communist Bloc countries.⁷ The Soviets and Chinese also supplied North Vietnam with other materiel such as trucks, tanks, artillery, air defense systems, and medical supplies and equipment.⁸ The Ho Chi Minh Trail further supplied the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) and Viet Cong (VC) with an endless supply of personnel and materiel to support the insurgency. As stated in Anthony Joes' *American and Guerrilla Warfare*:

Almost all the problems American forces encountered in the struggle to save South Vietnam had their roots, to one degree or another, in the failure to stop Hanoi's invasion of the South. The principal invasion route-the famous Ho Chi Minh Trail....⁹

Joes continues with the following description of the Trail and its effects.¹⁰ The Trail, which started in 1959, eventually became “a network of roads down which poured thousands of troops and trucks every month” a decade later. General Westmoreland saw the effect of the Trail and wanted to cut it, desiring to place three divisions across the Laotian border. General Bruce Palmer wanted a demilitarized zone (DMZ) across Thailand’s border held by the three divisions and supported by intensive airpower. Unfortunately, the Johnson administration refused to allow ground forces to block the Trail, authorizing only the use of airpower for the task. Despite heavy bombing of the Trail, traffic slowed but did not stop. The failure to close the Trail allowed the North to continue supplying NVA and VC forces operating in the south, as well as offer safe havens for the NVA and VC from attack. This condition significantly contributed to the eventual defeat of the United States and Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN).

These three examples demonstrate the correlation between external support and successful counterinsurgencies.¹¹ There is an example where applying effective border security disrupted this time-proven corollary - the French Algerian War.¹² This set the conditions for what may have been one of recent history’s few successful counterinsurgencies.

The Algerian War

France used several strategies to defeat the Algerian revolt and specifically the Algerian Armee de Liberation Nationale (ALN) during the Algerian War, as described by Otto Heilbrunn’s article “The Algerian Emergency, 1954-1962.”¹³ One was the establishment of physical barriers along the Tunisian and Moroccan borders. During the early part of the Algerian counterinsurgency, France discovered rebels were receiving much of their arms through the borders of Libya and Tunisia. “Frontier barriers stopped the flow of weapons and supplies to the rebels, and the territory under their control began to shrink; hence they could not replace their losses.” With these barriers, enemy strength in Algeria shrank from 35,000 troops to less than 10,000 by mid-1959.

Heilbrunn further elaborates that though France’s border strategy was successful, the overall counterinsurgency failed politically due to revelations of France’s harsh methods. Brutal interrogations and executions of rebels dissuaded support from Algerian Moslems and even France’s allies. One would wonder if the French Army would have won their counterinsurgency had it forsaken these unpopular methods and implemented its other successful strategies such as establishing effective border security to stop the external support of the insurgency.¹⁴ Regardless of the counterinsurgency’s overall failure, the France barrier system, known as the “Morice Line” after French Defense Minister Andre Morice, demonstrated its value during the

Algerian War.¹⁵ Therefore, one must analyze this barrier system to determine if a similar one could aid Coalition forces within the present conflict in Iraq.

The Morice Line

The Morice Line, as described by Alistair Horne's article "A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962," is synopsised as follows.¹⁶ The French completed the Morice Line in September of 1957 along the Tunisian border. The length of this barrier was 200 miles long starting north from the Mediterranean Sea coastline and running south to the empty Saharan desert where no one could cross undetected. The fence stood eight feet high, electrically charged to five thousand volts, and backed up with barbed-wire entanglements. On either side was a fifty-yard belt of anti-personnel mines. A track paralleling the rear of the barrier supported armed patrols equipped with powerful searchlights. The location of a break in the fence could be precisely determined, bringing in artillery fire from automatically sighted 105mm howitzers or mobile troops. The fence was also equipped with radar and alarm systems. A force of 80,000 French troops defended the line, including mechanized and armor units as well as four parachute regiments. The force had an abundance of helicopters to spot and track rebels able to cross the barrier. French defenders placed prime importance on intercepting border-crossing units before the end of the following day in order to prevent the rebels from dispersing into the interior.¹⁷ "A similar barrier was constructed along the Moroccan-Algerian border."¹⁸

The Morice Line demonstrated its effectiveness and resilience through the continuous unsuccessful attempts by the ALN to breach it. In 1957-1958, around 10,000 ALN troops were outside the barrier, armed and ready to fight or in training along the Tunisian frontier. Arms and ammunition were also flowing into this region from all over the world, including 17,000 rifles, 380 machine guns, 296 automatic rifles, 190 bazookas, 30 mortars, and over 100 million rounds of ammunition. Rebels on the interior of Algeria were starving for need of reinforcements and materiel. The ALN demonstrated their desperation to breach the barrier by using increasingly larger ALN forces, eventually leading to an eventual all-out offensive against the Line. Rebel troops also tried several techniques to breach the barrier to no avail. These included using high-tension wire-cutters from Germany and special hooks to lift up the wire, but electronic detectors located the breaks quickly. Insurgents tried burrowing under the wire, throwing insulated ramps over the top of the wire, or blasting Bangalore torpedoes through the wire. However, the French anti-personnel mines, the electric fence, or the sheer firepower of the defending French patrols always defeated these attempts. Insurgents tried using diversionary tactics, using a small unit to set off an alarm at one site, and the main body attempting to break

through some fifty kilometers away. At times, the insurgents would go all the way around the barrier into the barren Sahara Desert disguised as Maharists, but French aircraft or airdropped paratroops would interdict them.¹⁹

The resounding success of the Morice Line in preventing the continued flow of personnel and materiel into Algeria could lead to the conclusion that border security by itself can defeat an insurgency. The question of whether border security alone can defeat a counterinsurgency will need further analysis.

Can Border Security Defeat an Insurgency by Itself?

The linkage between effective border security and the success of the French counterinsurgency in Algeria is clear,²⁰ but border security cannot defeat an insurgency by itself. In fact, the overall counterinsurgency campaign should include several strategies in concert with border security as a major supporting element. To illustrate this point, four historical examples in Record's article will be discussed; these include the American Revolution, the American Civil War, the Vietnam Conflict, and the Algerian War.²¹

During the American Revolution, the Colonials fought a total war while the British fought a limited one. Even without French assistance, the Colonials had superior military strategy, using "protracted irregular warfare conducted by local irregulars, guerrilla bands, and an elusive Continental Army aimed at wearing down Britain's political will...." The Colonials used effective hit-and-run attacks in the countryside against exposed British and Hessian detachments based on the assumption that they could win by simply surviving. Hence, the British lost their counterinsurgency through constant attrition of their fixed military force within the American countryside.

The Confederate States of America, during the American Civil War, chose a military strategy that doomed it to failure, despite the loss of British or French support and the Union's success in sealing the South through naval blockade. The weaker, unsupported South decided to wage a direct conventional war against the stronger North. The South had two hopes for victory: major foreign intervention to reduce the material disadvantage the South had compared to the North, or adopting an indirect guerrilla war campaign. Since the South lost its hopes of gaining external aid, it had to rely on its military strategy to defeat the North. With its chosen symmetric strategy, it was only a matter of time before the North would defeat the South, but had the South's protracted its insurgency through an asymmetric strategy, the Confederacy may have dissuaded the Union from continuing the war. The Union would have had to adopt other strategies to deal with asymmetric warfare in conjunction with isolating the South, possibly using

non-kinetic elements of national power. It is unclear why the Confederacy adopted a maneuver strategy since prior conflicts proved the effectiveness of guerrilla campaigns. These included the American Revolution and the previous French occupation of Spain in 1808-1814, during which the Spanish defeated the French through a successful guerrilla war.

Record demonstrated that a combination of external assistance with stronger political will and a superior strategy decided the Vietnam War. There is no doubt that the Soviet Union, China, and other Communist Bloc countries supplied North Vietnam with personnel and materiel via the Ho Chi Minh Trail. However, it was the tenacity and persistence of the Communist cause, the use of indirect hit-and-run guerrilla tactics against static defenses, and protraction of the conflict to dissuade U.S. national will that were the underpinnings of the success of the Communist insurgency in South Vietnam.²² One would wonder if a barrier along South Vietnam's borders to cut off the Ho Chi Minh Trail, as General Westmoreland advocated,²³ would have changed the outcome of the Vietnam War had the United States not changed its military strategy within the interior of South Vietnam.

Of course, the French Algerian War, as detailed by Alistair Horne's article, clearly demonstrates that a counterinsurgency can be lost even with effective border security.²⁴ In addition to executions and torture used in interrogations, France used many other controversial counterinsurgency methods. One such method was France's displacement of Algerians from high concentrations of insurgents. This may have had the benefit of protecting the populace, clearing areas of rebels, and denying guerrillas food, shelter, and support, but ended up in failure due to hunger, overcrowding, and disease in these "regroupment camps." Intelligence gathered on insurgents through interrogation via torture may have stemmed the assassinations and bombings, but these methods clearly cost France its victory through its loss of continued national and Algerian support for the war.

These examples demonstrate the need to employ several concurrent strategies to deal with stronger insurgent will and superior military strategy while sustaining national and political will for a potentially unpopular counterinsurgency war effort, despite having border security.²⁵ The Algerian Revolution especially demonstrates the importance of non-military elements of national power in a counterinsurgency campaign. However, there is no doubt that border security is an important component to an overall successful counterinsurgency. Therefore, it is prudent to study what made the Morice Line an effective barrier system for France, and analyze what the United States and Iraqi governments must consider in developing a barrier to seal off Iraq from external support.

Considerations for Effective Border Security

Like the ALN during the Algerian War, the Iraqi insurgents and their external supporters will make every effort to ensure that lines of communications into Iraq remain open, providing personnel and materiel needed to continue and strengthen the insurgency. The insurgents' ultimate aim is to dissuade Iraqi national and political will by de-legitimizing the current United States and Iraqi governments and demonstrating the futility in continuing their counterinsurgency and stabilization efforts.²⁶ Here, we will discuss several considerations in making the border secure and resilient. Where possible, the study of the Morice Line as a model barrier system will help define these considerations.²⁷ The seven considerations include applying depth, variation, redundancy, randomness, lethality, reliability, and adequate response to intrusion attempts. Each consideration is briefly addressed below.

Depth. The Morice Line displayed the use of depth by the placement of a 50-yard belt of anti-personnel mines on either side of an electrified fence. Collectively, depth is the physical width across the barrier, depth under the barrier, and the height of the barrier. Obviously, the wider, deeper, and higher the barrier, the more secure and impenetratable the barrier becomes. Planners need to consider that outsiders will use any means to gain access as they tried against the Morice Line.

Variation. Another consideration of border security is varying the use of methods of border security. The Morice Line was a "system of systems" in which the integration of each individual system created a synergistic effect, allowing the collective system to exceed the contribution of each individual part. The Morice Line maintained its variation by the incorporation of detection alarms, pre-sighted artillery, and the use of frequent patrols as only a few of the many "sub-systems" collectively working together to secure the Algerian border. Therefore, variation is the use of separate and distinct systems that form the collective barrier. The greater the number of varying individual systems, the greater the synergy and effectiveness the barrier will display.

Redundancy. The Morice Line demonstrated its redundancy by the simultaneous use of anti-personnel mines, the electrified fence, and the additional barbed-wire entanglement obstacle. Redundancy is the use of separate, distinct, and independent systems that perform the same function. In the case of this example, the redundancy within the physical barrier served to dissuade and prevent entry.

Randomness. The fourth consideration for effective border security is the application of randomness throughout the barrier system to match random insurgent tactics. Randomness is the employment of systems along the barrier to operate at varying times and locations to avoid

predictable patterns. An example of this within the Morice Line was the use of sporadic ground or helicopter patrols to spot infiltrators. Obviously, the more random the use of varying systems along the barrier, the harder it would be for outsiders to predict what system they would encounter.

Lethality. Next, one must consider lethality within the barrier for an effective barrier. The Morice Line had several lethal systems, including anti-personnel mines, the electrified fence, and artillery systems to destroy forces seeking entry. Therefore, lethality is the ability of the barrier to cause certain death during any attempt to breach it. Lethality serves as a major deterrent to dissuade an intrusion attempt.

Reliability. The sixth consideration for effective border security is reliability. The ability to detect an attempted breach in the electric fence along with its location demonstrated the reliability of the Morice Line. Reliability is the barrier's ability to operate continuously without failure. Optimally, the barrier will need to be fully and constantly operative. The barrier would require an elaborate alarm system if either intrusion attempts or maintenance failures occurred.

Response to Intrusion Attempts. Lastly, response to intrusion attempts within the barrier must be considered. An example of this was France's ability to apply indirect fire quickly on insurgents attempting to breach the Morice Line or use parachute or heli-borne forces to interdict intruders. This consideration is the rapid application of military force to either interdict or defeat a force attempting to breach the barrier, or apply adequate response to deal with forces that successfully breached the obstacle. The faster the response time to attack the insurgent force, then the less likely the insurgents would successfully enter the defended area and evade capture within the local populace.

In summary, an effective barrier system must employ the seven aforementioned characteristics, namely depth, variation, redundancy, randomness, lethality, reliability, and adequate response to intrusion attempts. Only then will the barrier be effective in preventing continued external support of an insurgency. These considerations can specifically help protect Iraq's borders from support that clearly stems from outside influencers.

How External Support is Aiding the Iraqi Insurgency

There is no question that local nation state and non-state actors are externally supporting the Iraqi insurgency. This external support is having a negative impact on stabilizing and democratizing the nation of Iraq. During a recent Pentagon briefing in early-October 2006, General George Casey, the commander of Multinational Force-Iraq, briefed the following:

...there are several groups that are working that process (stabilizing Iraq) negatively. The first, the Sunni extremists, al Qaeda, and the Iraqi that are

supporting them....And lastly, the external actors – Iran and Syria. And both Iran and Syria continue to be decidedly unhelpful by providing support to the different extremists and terrorist groups operating inside Iraq....²⁸

Hence, at least two state actors, Iran and Syria, and at least one non-state actor, al Qaeda, are working to derail the U.S. efforts at de-stabilizing Iraq. Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi, a senior al Qaeda and terrorist leader, demonstrated al Qaeda's interest in the Iraqi insurgency by his presence in Iraq from approximately February 2003 until the time of his death in Iraq in June 2006.²⁹ An illustration of Iran's support of the Iraqi insurgency is from former U.S.

Representative Christopher Shays (R-CT), the Chairman of the Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and International Relations. Former Congressman Shay's report states that:

Iran is interfering and negatively influencing developments in Iraq. Iran is financing militias, smuggling weapons and explosives used by insurgents against Coalition troops and Iraqi Security Forces, and is seeking to influence the Iraqi political process.³⁰

The vast majority of violence is occurring in four of Iraq's 18 provinces; they include the provinces of Baghdad, Anbar, Salahuddin, and Diyala.³¹ Figure 1 shows Anbar province bordering Syria on the west, and Diyala bordering Iran on the east.³² Due to their geographic proximity to Syria and Iran, respectively, it should be no surprise that Anbar and Diyala provinces are problematic. Lieutenant General John R. Vines, Commander of the XVIII Airborne Corps and Multi-National Corps-Iraq until January 2006, correlated provincial violence to border proximity in the September-October 2006 *Military Review* stating:

Iraq's borders, especially the western one in Al-Anbar province, have historically been porous. Smugglers and traders move routinely between Iraq and Syria, and so did insurgents.³³

In summary, it is clear that Iran and Syria are the two primary actors supporting the Iraqi insurgency. It should be no surprise that provinces adjacent to these nations are most problematic and probable points of entry for Iranian- and Syrian-backed insurgents. In order to develop a barrier system for Iraq, it is important to address the topography of Iraq's international boundaries.

Characteristics of the Iraqi Borders

The physical characteristics of the Iraqi borders make it difficult to secure completely. Iraq has a total border length of 3,650 kilometers.³⁴ Iraq shares a 1,458-kilometer border with Iran and a

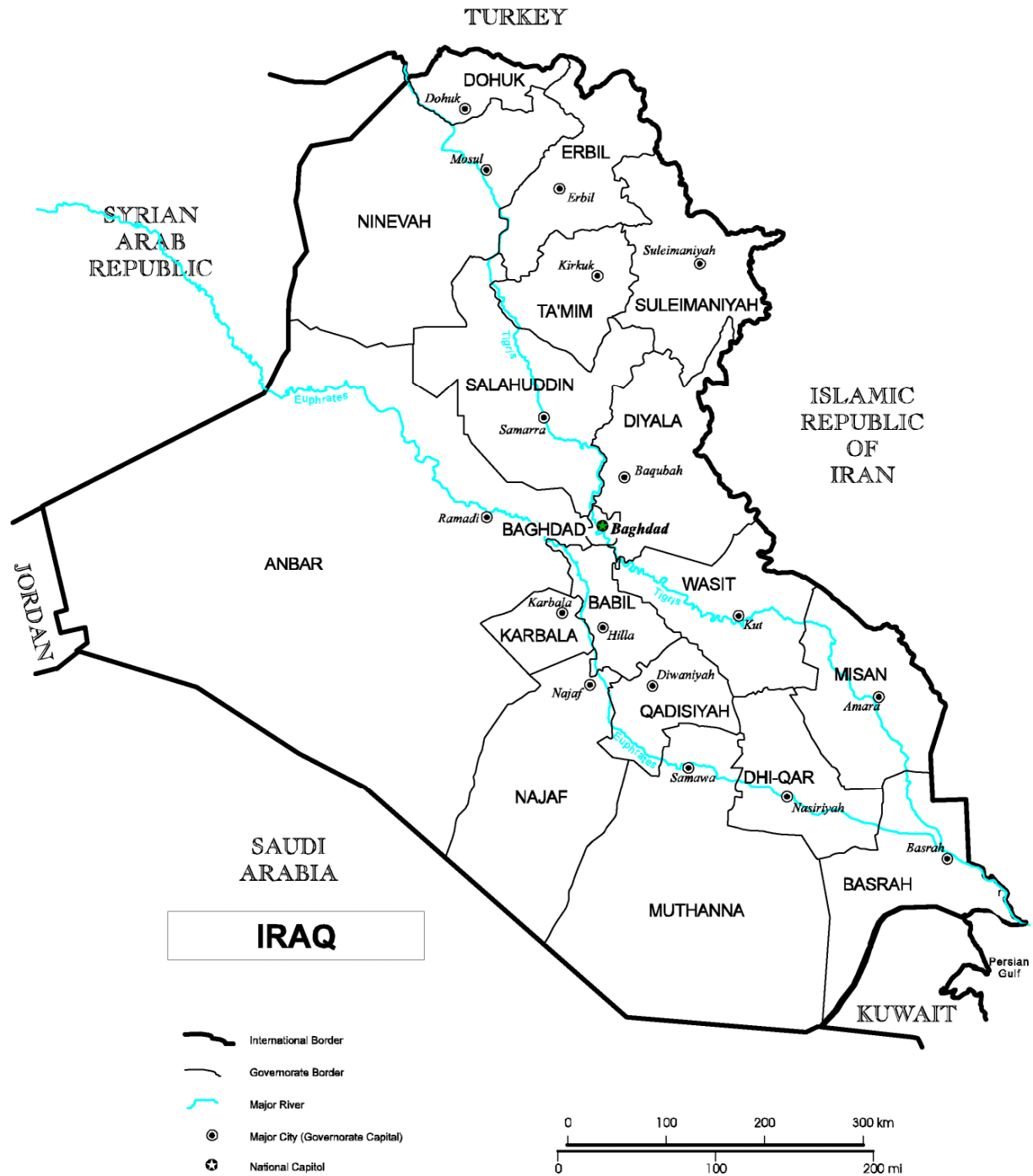


Figure 1. Provincial Map of Iraq

240-kilometer border with Kuwait to the east, a 181-kilometer border with Jordan and a 605-kilometer border with Syria to the west, an 814-kilometer border with Saudi Arabia to the south, and a 352-kilometer border with Turkey to the north.³⁵ Iraq also has a 58-kilometer coastline along the Persian Gulf,³⁶ and fourteen land highway ports of entry.³⁷ The terrain is mostly flat

and desolate desert along the borders in the west (with Jordan and Syria) and south (with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait).³⁸ The terrain is generally green and mountainous along the northern border with Turkey and the eastern border with Iran.³⁹ The Iran-Iraq border runs along the western edge of the Zagros Mountains, with the southern portion becoming a broad marshy plain, and subject to inundation.⁴⁰ Boundary pillars demarcate the length of the entire Iran-Iraq border and number sequentially from south to north.⁴¹ There seems to be no evidence that any physical barriers exist along any of Iraq's international boundaries.

The Coalition has recognized the border security problem and has begun focusing on the security of the Iraqi borders. The newly established Iraqi Department of Border Enforcement began training border enforcement officers that will eventually total a force of 37,000.⁴² The Iraqi government will also build 251 border forts employing night-vision capabilities; unattended ground sensors; and close circuit camera, television, and multiplex equipment.⁴³ It is unknown to the author whether Iraq is actually deploying an integrated and hardened physical barrier as is being advocated in this paper. Though the Iraqi government's efforts are a positive start, an approach to border security paralleling that of the United States with Mexico prior to 9/11 will most likely result in similar failure. One thing is certain as of the date of this paper. Despite the Iraqi government's efforts to improve border security, insurgents and materiel are still coming across Iraq's borders and the insurgency is worsening. As late as June 2005, General John Abizaid, Commander of U.S. Central Command, stated, "I believe there are more foreign fighters coming into Iraq then there were six months ago."⁴⁴

The barrier system for Iraq, like the Morice Line, should include the seven considerations previously discussed; depth, variation, redundancy, randomness, lethality, reliability, and response to intrusion attempts. Implementing these considerations can build upon the plans and work already completed to ensure these efforts were not in vain. However, before discussing how to implement an effective barrier system in Iraq, present border crossing sites in Iraq must also be addressed. Personnel assigned along the Syrian-Iraqi border have indicated that there have been problems with Iraqi border officials taking bribes and only superficially inspecting vehicles seeking to cross borders.⁴⁵ Despite the need for cross-border international trade and desire for family visitation, maintaining national security for Iraq should be a paramount national objective. The Iraqi government will need to develop policies to regulate border-crossing sites properly and efficiently, ensuring the denial of entry of insurgents and their materiel.

Implementing an Effective Barrier System in Iraq

It may be prudent to discuss the various systems that are available to build an effective barrier and strategies to employ them. These systems can include unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), Predator aircraft, ground radar systems, unattended ground sensors, infrared (IR) detection towers, anti-personnel mines, electrified fences, entanglement obstacles, searchlights, night vision scopes, ground forces, and establishing free fire areas within vast open areas. The Morice Line employed several of these systems effectively. As stated earlier, France assumed risk in the open and unpopulated Sahara Desert using armed air missions to detect ALN insurgents seeking entry into Algeria, focusing their hardened barrier on likely avenues of insurgent approach. Therefore, it is not necessary to employ a barrier system around the entire 3650-kilometer border. It definitely would be unaffordable and impractical to do so.

The Morice Line can serve as a viable model for an Iraqi barrier system, using the aforementioned systems to secure border areas of high, moderate, or low probabilities of intrusion. High-risk borders can use a static electric fence surrounded by mines and frequented by patrols and UAV flights. Remotely triggered anti-personnel mines can prevent the successful use of mine detectors to locate and disarm them. Coalition forces can use UAVs, Predator aircraft, unattended ground sensors, and IR detection towers along areas that the United States or Iraqi government cannot afford to emplace a physical barrier, or a moderate-risk area. Low-risk areas can use occasional armed reconnaissance flights; long-range radar; and mock radars, towers, mines, or weapon systems to replace actual systems. Figure 2 shows a possible scenario using all of the aforementioned systems most suited for open-desert environments such as the Syrian border.

Along the Iranian border, U.S. and Iraqi forces can employ the barrier system on passable terrain cleared of vegetation where typically prominent terrain and vegetation exist. Coalition forces can cover impassable areas with unattended ground sensors; and frequent UAV, armed aerial reconnaissance, and ground patrols. A better alternative for the Iranian border may be to move the barrier system further west from the Zagros Mountains to terrain that is flatter and less vegetated. With this option, unattended ground sensors can serve as early warning devices of insurgent presence prior to reaching the barrier system when randomly placed along trails between the Iraq-Iran border and the barrier.

To better defeat insurgent forces seeking entrance into Iraq, it is recommended that air assault units temporarily perform the border security mission currently performed by the Iraqi Department of Border Security (outside the border crossing sites). Air assault units that are located at various border forts can respond to border incursion attempts quickly, and are

equipped to respond more appropriately to military insurgents. These units can cover various zones of responsibility, which is narrower for high-risk areas, and broadens for lower-risk borders. One air assault division could be responsible for the Western Iraqi border and another for the east. It is recommended that the Iraqi air assault units include U.S. augmentation or advisory staff to bring the Iraqi units to acceptable levels of training proficiency. Upon the stabilization of Iraq, border enforcement officers can eventually replace the air assault troops.

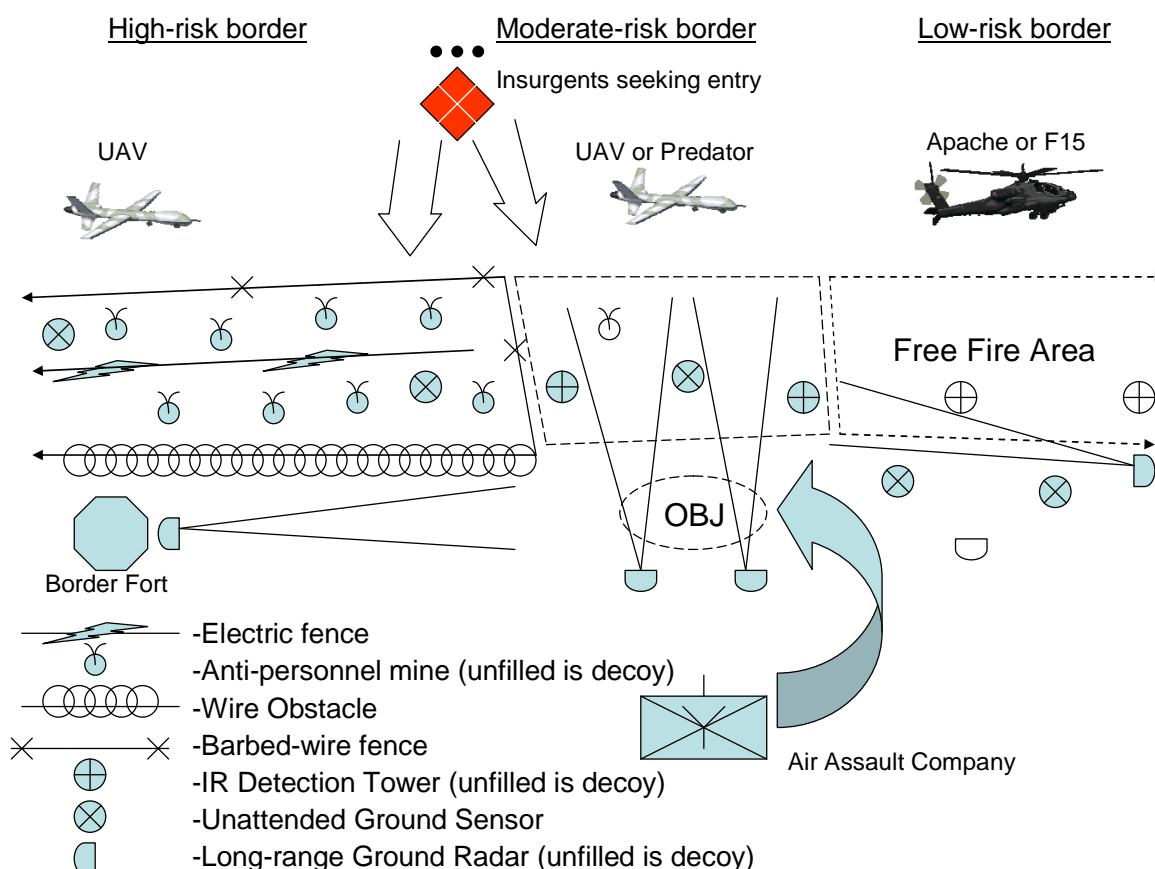


Figure 2. Example of Barrier System

The use of anti-personnel mines on a proposed barrier for Iraq is controversial due to the recent international moratorium on their use. These mines add lethality to the barrier, its major deterrent for an insurgent, and are therefore a necessary component. To mitigate any inadvertent or accidental loss of innocent life by the mines, a barbed wire fence or wire obstacle should bound the minefield. Clearly marked signs should be erected outside both sides of the entire barrier stating the presence of the mines and the high-likelihood of certain death in a breach attempt. The signs should show the presence of mines and their effects for the illiterate.

Coalition forces must also properly manage low- and moderate-risk borders by the use of signs, appropriate rules of engagement, and other control measures. To prevent the killing of innocent civilians or friendly forces nearing a free-fire area, borders must have clearly marked signs indicating the presence of an impact area. Forces and aircraft patrolling these borders must also have rules of engagement that preclude indiscriminate firing on anyone within a free-fire area unless properly identified as a likely insurgent. To accommodate the migration of nomadic tribes, the Iraqi government may need to establish additional border crossing sites along prominent migration paths.

The question is how to employ the above barrier system? There are two feasible courses of action to accomplish this. The first option is to emplace the barrier along the most troubled provinces, specifically Anbar and Diyala provinces. Based on Lieutenant General Vines' assessment, this is where insurgents are seeking entry into Iraq. Sealing these borders first would definitely make resupplying the insurgency much more problematic and risky due to lengthened insurgent lines of communication. France's success in cutting off ALN lines of communication by sealing the Tunisian and Moroccan borders validated the viability of this approach.

A second option is to surround troubled cities such as Baghdad, Mosul, Tirkuk, Fallujah, and Baghdad's "Sadr City" district with the barrier system, and establish checkpoints at every entrance to these cities. France validated this concept during the Battle of Algiers in January 1957, using a regiment of the French 10th Paratroop Division to surround and control access into the city of Algiers' Muslim sector of Casbah.⁴⁶ "By September 1957, Algiers was completely under French control, and this system was applied to all major cities until terrorism had come to a halt."⁴⁷ The barrier system may be less elaborate than the international border barrier and can simply consist of a high, thick, steel-reinforced wall with electric fences, wire obstacles, and alarm detectors over the top of it. Random UAV reconnaissance flights can inspect the wall aerially for incursions.

This option would have the benefit of starving the insurgency in the most troubled areas, but would have several disadvantages. These include limiting availability of commerce, food, and clothing; raising prices within the cities; delaying transportation; and causing social unrest and anti-U.S. sentiment. This option would also require large personnel and material resources to implement due to the high volume of traffic entering and leaving these large cities. As an initial step, it is recommended that Coalition forces, in conjunction with the Iraqi government, seal the Anbar and Diyala province borders to stem the flow of insurgents and materiel across Iraq's borders. The Coalition and Iraqi government should seal off Sadr City to gain control of

this restive city district. If Sadr City is successfully controlled through this measure, it is recommended that other troubled cities are sealed off and controlled in like-manner.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Coalition, in conjunction with the Iraqi government, seal the Iraqi border as quickly as possible. As stated in David Galula's *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, borders are a permanent source of weakness for a counterinsurgency, and are one of four primary factors for a successful insurgency.⁴⁸ "Until the borders are controlled,...the odds of actually defeating the insurgency are low."⁴⁹ To seal the Iraqi borders, the United States and the Iraqi governments should implement the following measures.

(1) The U.S. government should dedicate adequate funds to contract a request for proposal to develop the Iraqi barrier system to include further research of its feasibility. The proposed barrier system in Figure 2 may not be the best solution, so a "think tank" approach to developing a better solution may be appropriate. However, a border security strategy like that of the pre-9/11 U.S.-Mexican border is inadequate, and therefore requires a hardened border barrier and air assault troops to replace border agents for increased mobility and firepower. The study and proposal should consider how to integrate the current efforts being conducted to improve Iraqi border security so these efforts are not obviated. Once a proposal is developed and approved, it is recommend sealing the borders of the problematic Anbar and Diyala provinces first, and expand the fenced barrier to include the entire Syrian and Iranian borders if the insurgency continues to maintain its intensity.

(2) It is additionally recommend that the most troubled cities and city districts such as Fallujah and Sadr City be sealed off and secured as the Algerian Casbah sector was controlled during the Battle of Algiers. The sealing of Sadr City can serve as an initial test case for sealing other Iraqi cities as a viable counterinsurgency strategy in Iraq.

(3) To prevent insurgents from entering Iraq through border crossing sites, the Iraqi government should review its policies on how best to inspect and regulate all inbound transportation of commerce and foreign citizens at international border crossing sites. Further analysis on how to best implement effective border control at border-crossing sites is also needed to ensure insurgents and their materiel is denied entry.

Conclusion

In conclusion, though there is no guarantee that external assistance will ensure insurgent success, "the correlation between external assistance and insurgent victory...is striking."⁵⁰ Likewise, effective border security cannot necessarily win a counterinsurgency by itself, but a

nation can definitely lose without it. Even with effective border security, there is no guarantee of a successful counterinsurgency without the application of other viable concurrent strategies. However, this paper has demonstrated that United States and Iraqi military and government leaders must focus significant efforts on securing the borders to ensure an effective overall counterinsurgency campaign. It is vitally important now to erect an effective barrier along Iraq's borders if there is any hope of establishing Iraq's new government for the long-term. The insurgents as well as external terrorists will go to any length to ensure the democratization and stabilization of Iraq fails.⁵¹

Iraq must seal its international borders with a hardened barrier like the Morice Line used by the French during the Algerian War. This is especially true of Iraq's borders with Iran and Syria. The barrier to seal Iraq's borders must meet certain characteristics such as depth, variation, redundancy, randomness, lethality, reliability, and adequate response to intrusions. As history has shown with the Morice Line, an effective Iraqi barrier will cause the insurgency to lose external support and eventually dry up. If the French could build an effective and proven barrier 50 years ago, the United States and Iraqi governments should be able to build one in Iraq now. This study also has implications in securing other international borders such as that between the Afghanistan and Iran, as well as helping defeat future insurgencies.

Endnotes

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⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Anthony J. Joes, *American and Guerrilla Warfare* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2000), 240-241.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Record, 36-49.

¹² Ibid., 47.

¹³ Otto Heilbrunn, "The Algerian Emergency, 1954-1962," *U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Low Intensity Conflict Counterinsurgency Case Studies* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, December 1985), 6-8.

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¹⁵ Ibid., 47.

¹⁶ Alistair Horne, "Excerpt from A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962", *U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Low Intensity Conflict Counterinsurgency Case Studies* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, December 1985), 137-138.

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¹⁸ Record, 47.

¹⁹ Horne, 137-138.

²⁰ Record, 45-47.

²¹ Ibid., 36-49.

²² Ibid., 37.

²³ Joes, 240.

²⁴ Horne, 140-147.

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³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Robert Bateman, "Iraq and the Problem of Border Security," *Johns Hopkins University Press* 26 (Winter 2006): 41-47 [database on-line]; available from Proquest; accessed 19 October 2006.

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³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ U.S. Department of State Bureau of Intelligence and Research, *International Boundary Study No. 64, Iran-Iraq Boundary* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Office of the Geographer, 13 July 1978), second preface map.

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⁴⁵ Michael Barry, Lieutenant Colonel, United States Marine Corps, interview by author, 13 September 2006.

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⁵¹ Chiarelli and Michaelis, 14-15.

